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ABSTRACT

Focusing specifically on teaching as a career goal among rural youth in Norway, Germany, and the United States, this cross-national comparative study took into account the general patterning of career ambitions in each society--upward mobility opportunities, status attainment strategies, and organizational character of the educational systems (sorting-out mechanisms). Sex, place of residence (community context), father's occupational status, and achieved scholastic performance level were considered as determinants of career choosing behavior. Data were gathered between 1965 and 1970 in a West Virginia coal county and in three regions of Germany, Norway, and Kentucky. Questionnaires were administered to 2,000 American high school students, 1,427 Norwegian "ungdomsskole" (comprehensive school) and "gymnas" (secondary school) students, and 811 German "gymnasium" (secondary school) students just before a major decision-making point in their educational career track. Findings included: teaching was the most popular career choice in all three societies, especially of girls; European boys accorded teaching a higher status; teaching was a more popular professional career goal among youth from working class families; and scholastic ability had little effect upon the relative popularity of teaching among American high school and Norwegian "ungdomsskole" girls. (NQ)

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SOME PLAN TO BECOME TEACHERS: DETERMINANTS OF CAREER SPECIFICATION AMONG RURAL YOUTH IN NORWAY, GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES

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Some Plan to Become Teachers: Determinants of Career Specifications Among Rural Youth in Norway, Germany and the United States[1/]

Modern societies allocate enormous sums and sizable portions of their budgets and capital resources to support viable and efficient systems of education (wide-ranging, rationally-organized networks of schools, competent personnel, and functionally effective curricula). A big share of these investments goes toward the training of young people for teaching roles. Indeed, in most societies today teachers comprise by far the largest category of professionals and, because of normal attrition and a general growth of the educational establishment, the training of recruits to staff the teacher corps is an important national priority and an extremely expensive proposition.[2/]

In the United States, for example, there are currently about two and a half million teachers employed at the primary and secondary school levels and they constitute about one-fourth of America's professional work force (United States Bureau of Census, 1970). Assuming a teacher turnover rate of about 8 percent per year, the current annual demand for additional certified teachers is around 200,000 (Frankel and Beamer, 1975). Training the necessary replacements, which normally requires four years of teacher's college, is unquestionably a big and costly business.

For any society, of course, a system of formal education serves as the basic mechanism for behavioral and ideological socialization; its mission is to bridge the old and the new - to build upon the past toward the future (Durkheim, 1956; Bowman, 1966; Park, 1943; Schwarzweller and Brown, 1962). Teachers are delegated a key role in that process. As a professional class, they occupy a strategically central and sensitive position in the general social organization and relative to the forces of societal development and change.[3/]

Yet despite the enormous cost and obvious importance to any modern society of maintaining a dedicated corps of professionally competent teachers, our knowledge of the complex processes and associated factors that affect the tracking of certain young people toward careers in teaching is rather limited. An extensive search of the contemporary literature in sociology and education (facilitated in part by accessing the ERIC/CRESS files), turned up very few works bearing upon this particular issue. Except for a study by Pavalko (1965), which is derived from Wisconsin data and deals with differences in the characteristics of boys and girls selecting teaching careers, most researches delving into the problem tend to use small, unrepresentative samples and are rather limited in scope (see, for example, Best, 1948; Betz, 1973; Carlson, 1951; Floud and Scott, 1961; McGuire and White, 1957; Wattenberg, 1957; for and excellent review and bibliography of earlier studies on the social background of teaching see, Charters, 1963). Some of these researches rely upon data from case studies of teachers. Many are more concerned with personality attributes of youths recruited into teaching than with their social origins (for a review of this literature, see Getzels and Jackson, 1963). Few if any tap the selection process at critical decision-making points. And, although the effects of school and community contexts on the teacher role have been considered, no empirical study has come to our attention that has employed a cross-national comparative strategy in researching the social background of teachers.[4/] (One gets the impression that societal context and its macro-structural mechanisms for sorting-out young people for career roles in society are regarded as of little consequence or as "given" conditions that cannot be altered and, therefore, neither threaten the validity of research designs and system-specified findings nor arouse our scientific curiosity).

The relative paucity of sociological research on the issue of teacher recruitment is perhaps understandable. Much of the recent American literature on career choosing behavior addresses the "status attainment" problem and the various occupations "chosen" by young people are couched in status terms. Invariably, "teacher" is assigned to the "professional" category or to a specific ordinal position on some appropriate status or prestige scale. Researchers generally seem unconcerned that teaching is often the more popular choice among high school students and especially so among rural youths and girls. This fact, of course, is undoubtedly relevant to the proper interpretation of findings from such studies; indeed, we could speculate on the measurement distortions that can result when, for example, half or more of the cases classified at the upper end of a status hierarchy are located at one specific point on the scale. In any event, the situs dimension of career choosing behavior merits greater attention than it has received in recent years; such a strategy, whether concerned with a wide range of occupational types or with a single occupation, would serve to broaden our perspectives on the phenomenon in question and to complement the results obtained and conclusions drawn from researches concentrating on the status dimensions of career choice.[5/]

The present inquiry, a cross-national comparative study, was designed with this aim in mind. Although our attention focuses specifically on teaching as a career goal among rural young people in Norway, Germany, and the United States, we are also concerned with the general patterning of career ambitions (the status dimension) in all three societies . These patterns, to some extent, reflect the normative circumstances and structural conditions ("the big picture") that affect the specification of particular career interests and the meaningfulness of alternative status attainment strategies. Our approach takes into account the relative proportion of youths who are planning to enter the professions (upward mobility

chances), the relative attractiveness of teaching in relation to other professions (status attainment strategies), and the organizational character of the educational systems in these three societies (sorting-out mechanisms). Within the comparative framework, various determinants of career choosing behavior are considered: the sex role factor, residence place, father's occupational status, and scholastic performance level attained.

Our inquiry is exploratory. We believe that the teaching profession, as a career choice or status-attainment strategy, may often serve as a feasible option for ambitious young people whose alternatives, for one reason or the other, are relatively limited. Where opportunities for upward mobility and professional or elite status are restricted (by the very nature of prevailing social and economic realities), teaching may be perceived and/or function as "a way up and out," (i.e., as a transitional stage on a ladder of upward intergenerational mobility). Thus, we would expect teaching to be a more attractive professional career line for girls, rural-reared youngsters, children of manual workers, and those students who have not performed exceptionally well scholastically. Boys, town-reared youngsters, children from middle-class families, and exceptionally good scholars have access to a greater range of professional career options and, consequently, would be less likely to seek out a career in teaching.[6/]

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Although the educational system of Norway, Germany and the United States can be said to have similar functional goals, there are marked differences in organization and in the manner by which young people are sorted-out for higher education. These differences have been noted and discussed elsewhere (Schwarzweller, 1973; and Lyson, 1974). For present purposes, nevertheless, it is useful and perhaps necessary to summarize briefly some of the more relevant points of comparison.

American children normally complete at least twelve years of schooling before they are eligible to consider college or advanced vocational training. This is usually arranged as six or eight years of primary plus six or four years of secondary school.

In Norway, on the other hand, the basic educational track is nine years beginning at age 7; six years of elementary (barneskole) plus three years of comprehensive school (ungdomsskole). The comprehensive school is the basis for admission to all secondary schools in Norway -- whether the gymnas or any of the numerous kinds of vocational and technical schools. Upon completion of the comprehensive school, pupils must take a general examination and those who do well, have followed the gymnas oriented plan in their ninth year, and have made good grades in other subjects not covered by the exam, may gain admission to the gymnas. At the conclusion of the gymnas experience, now generally a three year program, students take a nationally administered matriculation examination (examin artium) which serves as a major qualifying hurdle for admission to the universities, teachers' training colleges and other institutions of higher education.

In Germany, the "sorting-out" of youngsters for secondary schools occurs even earlier than in Norway -- at about age 10 or 11 -- and at that branching-off the level of future career alternatives is, for all practical purposes, established. Only about one-fourth of the German youth population enters the secondary school track (Gymnasium or Realschule). Only those who successfully complete the ninth year of Gymnasium and pass the terminal exam (Abitur) are eligible to attend the university or teacher's training college (Paedagogischen Hochschule). For those who remain in the elementary school track, 2 or 3 years of additional vocational training or apprenticeship beyond the Volksschule level is mandatory. Since the options of an academic goal then have been virtually bypassed, most youngsters at that point are eager to begin a work career.

Achieved status is the organizing principle for the system of social mobility in all three societies (understandably so, for these societies share certain political, ideological and cultural traditions -- they are industrialized, modernized, and structurally similar in many respects). Nevertheless, there are notable differences in how this principle is instituted. Emphasizing very early selection, parental involvement at crucial decision-making points, and relatively rigid tracking, the German system is extremely sensitive to traditionalized social class norms. The Norwegian system can also be described as a sponsorship model (Turner, 1960). However, unlike the German, tracking occurs at a later stage and is based more upon prior scholastic achievements and standardized testing. In the American case, which Turner (1960) describes as a "contest model," structural barriers to upward mobility are not as rigidly formalized and, according to the prevailing American ideology, educational opportunities are virtually open to all who are willing to devote their energies in that direction. "Tracking," however, is becoming evident within an increasing number of high schools (Kitsuse and Cicourel, 1963) and local and regional variations in the quality of schooling are a fact of life in America.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The research data are from a cross-national project which was designed to achieve a reasonably high degree of comparability at all stages of the research process including selection of study populations, instrument construction, data collection techniques, measurement and coding procedures, and analysis strategies.

Information was collected during four separate, but coordinated phases of field work: in three regions of Germany (1965); in three regions of Kentucky, (1968); in three regions of Norway, (1969); and in a West Virginia coal county, (1970). The regions were chosen to represent, in so far as possible, a wide range

of rural socioeconomic circumstances within each society; included are a rural low-income area, a mixed-commercial farming-industrialized area, and a more heavily industrialized rural area. These regional settings are "rural" in an ecological sense; they are comprised of small towns, villages and open-country residences rather than of metropolitan centers and cities. Farming may or may not be an important enterprise in an area; it is not, for example, in the West Virginia coal-field county. Nevertheless, in comparison with the general populations in these three countries, the study populations are more heavily weighted toward rural social origins (Schwarzweller, 1973; for a detailed discussion of these regional settings and an analysis of the effects of regional variations on the structuring of educational and mobility plans of rural youth in the American case, see Lyson, 1976).

Questionnaires were administered in classrooms either by a member of the research staff (in the American case) or by regular school personnel who had been instructed on the correct procedures through meetings with the research directors and school officials (in the German and Norwegian cases). In all cases, information was collected just before a major decision-making point in the educational career track.

Occupational career plan was determined from responses to an open-ended question: "What kind of work do you actually expect that you will be doing as a lifetime occupation?" (This was preceded by a more general question that referred to and "ideal career".) Responses were classified in both status and situs terms with specific occupations such as teacher coded separately. Status-ranking followed the Edward's scale approach and judges were asked to classify vague cases.

Father's manual-nonmanual occupational status is used as an indicant of social class origin since it assures a high degree of cross-societal equivalency (Schwarzweller, 1973). The necessary information was obtained from an open-ended question.

This variable, along with place of residence (open-country or small village vs. town or large village) and sex are introduced as conditions to elaborate the basic analysis.

Scholastic performance level was determined from cumulative grade average attained in school. In the American case, a field worker obtained the necessary information directly from class records in each of the 21 schools. In Norway and Germany, on the other hand, grade averages were obtained from class records by the principal teacher and the rankings were reported in gross terms: thirds and quartiles. Although somewhat different procedures were employed to collect data, the resulting measures, eventually reduced to simple, dichotomized, ordinal scales, are basically equivalent. In all three cases, it should be noted, the rankings are vis-a-vis graduating peers in the particular school and not in terms of all other pupils in the study population; local standards of scholastic ability are emphasized (for an analysis of the effect of scholastic performance on the structuring of ambition, see Schwarzweller, 1976).

FINDINGS

SEX DIFFERENTIALS

1. Patterns of Career Choice

Boys generally are more inclined toward professional careers than are girls (Table 1). Many girls, of course, plan to marry and become homemakers soon after completing their basic schooling. Although they are omitted from the present analysis, this was the stated intention of about 15 percent of the American high school and Norwegian ungdomsskole girls.[7] Taking these cases into account exaggerates sex differentials by about four percent (thus, in fact, only 23.5 percent of the American high school and 18.2 percent of the Norwegian ungdomsskole girls plan on professional careers).

We also observe (Table 1) that sex differentials (percentage differences between boys and girls) are remarkably similar in the American high school and Norwegian ungdomsskole cases, even though the American students exhibit greater interest (proportionately) in professional careers than their Norwegian counterparts. In both cases, however, controlling on residence place (observed by comparing Tables 2A and 2B) specifies the sex differential effect; it obtains among "town" youths but not among those from rural neighborhoods. Likewise, sex differentials are more pronounced among high scholastic achievers and working class youths than among lower achievers and youths from middle class families (Tables 3 and 4).

At the secondary school levels in Europe, sex differences in orientation toward professional careers are much stronger, with the German Gymnasium case manifesting a rather extreme pattern favoring males. Since sorting-out for professional career opportunities occurs earlier and in a more formally structured manner in the European than in the American system of education, norms affecting sex differentiation in career goals undoubtedly exercise considerable influence at these critical transitional points. In the American case too, sex differentials are known to intensify at every step up the ladder through college and post-college education to professional career status. (Currently, the professional work force in America is about 60 percent male).

One may infer then, as some scholars do, that in striving for the upper reaches of the occupational hierarchy, girls tend to experience and/or perceive greater constraints and fewer opportunities than boys and, consequently, they are less likely to aspire to entering the contest. In any event, in our subsequent interpretation of findings that bear upon the question "who chooses to become a teacher?" it is clear that we must consider the pattern of sex differentiation in the nature and range of professional career desiderata and opportunities.

2. Popularity of a Teaching Career

Among rural youth who aspire to enter the professions, teaching is undoubtedly the most popular career choice. Table 1 reports the percentage of boys and girls who plan to become teachers relative to those choosing other professional careers and other lesser-status career alternatives.

In all cases, the dominant theme and obvious dream that characterizes the upward mobility aspirations of rural girls is "to become a teacher." This theme is especially strong among American high school girls; over 80 percent of those who aspire to professional careers want to become teachers. The relative attractiveness of teaching as a professional career goal of girls is only slightly less strong in Norway and only moderately reduced (to 65 percent) in the German Gymnasium case.

Although boys seem to recognize a broader, more varied range of professional career options that compete for their attention, teaching is also the most popular professional career choice of boys. Among those who aspire to professional careers, about one-third favors teaching; the proportions are remarkably similar in the American and Norwegian cases and only slightly less (26 percent) at the German Gymnasium level.

In all four contexts, sex differentials in the popularity of teaching vis-a-vis other professions are exceedingly strong. The relative inclination of girls toward teaching careers, however, is somewhat greater in the American (Q = .82) than in the European cases.

These patterns of sex differentials are essentially maintained when residence place, father's occupational status, and scholastic performance are taken into account (Tables 2 through 4).[8/] Only among Norwegian gymnas students who have attained exceptionally good scholastic records, do we find a slightly larger proportion of boys than girls planning to enter the teaching profession (32 vs. 29

percent); indeed, teaching is almost as popular a professional career choice among boys as among girls at this level. In general, however (and the generalization is particularly important at the American high school and Norwegian ungdomsskole levels), the basic pattern of sex differences in the relative popularity of a teaching career holds despite the introduction of three, potentially disturbing conditional variables.

An additional, albeit rather obvious fact should be noted: the stream of youngsters drawn toward the teaching profession is composed predominantly of females. Among all youths who aspire to become teachers, the proportion of girls is 55 percent at the secondary levels in Norway and Germany, 60 percent at the Norwegian ungdomsskole level, and 66 percent in the American high school case.[9/] American schools, of course, have traditionally relied more upon female teachers than have European schools (currently, about 69 percent of all elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States are women) and such structural idiosyncracies tend to be reflected in the career choosing patterns of the various cohorts.

These findings, then, clearly demonstrate the enormous popularity and critical importance of teaching as a professional career option for girls, and especially so for American (rural) girls. It is also an important professional career alternative for boys, to be sure, but by no means does it play as dominant a role in setting the tone of status-striving and the character of ambition among boys as it does for girls.

Before we discuss the implications of these findings in greater detail, let us briefly explore the effects manifested by three conditional factors.

RESIDENCE FACTOR

The study populations were drawn from a wide range of regional socioeconomic situations that are basically "rural" in character. Students and schools in

metropolitan centers were excluded by design and, consequently, generalizations must be addressed to the rural "hinterland" sectors of these three societies and intersocietal comparisons must be formulated cautiously. Within the given contexts, however, it is possible to distinguish youngsters who reside in the rural countryside (farms, open-country residence, or in the European context, small villages or hamlets) from those who reside in towns or small, provincial cities. Categorized in this manner, residence place also effectively discriminates in terms of school location (and associated characteristics, such as size) and, therefore, provides a simple "control" over school effect.

In the American case, for both boys and girls, teaching is a more popular professional career goal among those reared in rural, open-country environs than among those reared in towns (Tables 2A and 2B). "Rural" youngsters, of course, are in general somewhat less inclined toward professional careers than are their "town" counterparts. A similar pattern obtains for Norwegian girls at the ungdomsskole level and, in a more striking fashion, at the gymnas level. (Indeed, the enormous popularity of a teaching career among rural-reared gymnas girls tends to inflate their level of professional career ambition somewhat above that of town-reared gymnas girls). A quite different pattern emerges for Norwegian boys. Boys from town are more likely to aspire to professional careers, but the relative popularity of teaching vis-a-vis other professions is comparable among town and rural-reared Norwegian boys at both the ungdomsskole and gymnas levels. In the German Gymnasium case, on the other hand, residence place manifests little effect, either for boys or for girls, on degree of professional career ambition or on the relative popularity of teaching.

Although place of residence is associated to some extent with the relative popularity of teaching as a professional choice among girls in rural Norway and the United States, differentials in levels of status aspiration between "rural"

and "town" girls are rather weak (not nearly as sharply differentiated as they are among boys). Hence, it is certainly of theoretical import to note that "rural" girls oriented to the professions are more likely to consider teaching. This phenomenon (or reversal effect), no doubt, has something to do with sex differentials and residence-related factors in the distribution of career opportunities.

For boys, however, in both the American and Norwegian cases, rurality manifests a greater "dampening" influence upon level of status aspiration than it does for girls. Even so, and consistent with the generalized inference suggested above (namely, the "reversal effect"), residence place is also associated with the relative popularity of teaching among American boys. The effect, however, does not obtain among boys in Norway. It may be that the teaching profession enjoys a stronger status and a firmer image as an appropriate career line for males in Norway than it does in America.

German Gymnasium students represent an extremely elite segment of Germany's youth population. At this level, the place of residence effect on career choice patterns is negligible.

An earlier study in Wisconsin (Pavalko, 1965) found that high school seniors planning on a career in teaching do not seem to be drawn disproportionately from any particular community-size category. This, the author says, "implies that size of community of residence does not operate as a selective factor in the attraction of youth to the teaching field." Our methodological approaches and analytical strategies are quite different. Nevertheless, it is clear that findings from the present study - particularly those that apply to the American and Norwegian cases - are not consistent with those from that earlier study. We, of course, have focused special attention on rural regional contexts; rural regional variations in the relative popularity of teaching exist and are especially strong in the case of American boys. In any event, although this question certainly

merits further inquiry, the residential origins of recruits into the teaching profession is not as critical an issue with respect to the overall viability and functional adequacy of the teaching profession as are those dealing with the issues of social class origins and scholastic background.

SOCIAL CLASS BACKGROUND

It is a well-known and firmly established principle that youngsters from upper-status family backgrounds hold a decided edge over their lower-status peers in the competition for advanced education and professional careers. Except among Norwegian gymnas boys, findings from the present study (Tables 3A and 3B) are basically supportive of that generalization.

In all cases, however, and including Norwegian gymnas boys, the relative popularity of teaching as a professional career alternative is greater among working class youths than among those from middle-class origins. Furthermore, this pattern is consistently stronger for girls than for boys. Indeed, at the German Gymnasium level, social class differences in the relative attractiveness of teaching, although clearly evident for girls (Q = .35), are negligible for boys.

As noted earlier and by other researchers elsewhere (Alexander and Eckland, 1974) the social class factor generally manifests greater influence, both direct and indirect, on the status aspirations and attainments of girls than of boys. Hence, if we view a career in teaching as an intermediate or lower - level professional option on the intergenerational mobility ladder (a familiar and comprehensible work role and one that suggests a feasible strategy for moving "up" from a situation characterized by a paucity of competing role models and strategies) then it is not surprising to find somewhat greater social class differentials in the relative popularity of teaching among girls than of boys. Boys in general

are not as encumbered by normative constraints in the patterning of career mobility; similarly, girls from middle-class families have more going for them in overcoming those constraints than do girls from working class families (the latter, if they are professionally-oriented, are more likely to consider a career in teaching).

These findings, then, suggest a rather interesting phenomenon relevant to current lines of research on the relationship between social class origins and the status aspirations and attainments of rural youth.

SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE

A student's record of scholastic performance is determined by a variety of factors, events, and circumstances. Intellectual ability, of course, plays an important part. But grades are affected to some extent as well by a desire to learn, general attitude toward the classroom situation, and ability to cope with the social demands of teachers and peers. From whatever perspective, scholastic rank attained is undoubtedly a useful and appropriate indicator of a youngster's potential effectiveness as a teacher, because of the attitudinal dimension, perhaps more relevant to the purposes at hand than standard I.Q. scores or the like. All other things being equal, we expect that students who emerge from the school system with credentials of excellence are more likely to do well someday in positions of responsibility within that system.

Tables 4A and 4B report patterns of career choice by scholastic performance ranks (students in the upper-third of their school class compared with their lower-ranked peers). In all four cases, the exceptionally good scholars are far more likely to aspire to professional careers.[10/]

Among girls (Table 4A), only in the Norwegian gymnas case does scholastic rank manifest a significant (and rather substantial) difference in the relative popularity of teaching. Indeed, lower-ranked (and presumably less qualified)

Norwegian gymnas girls are far more inclined toward teaching careers than are their more scholastically talented classmates; the latter lean toward careers in medicine, science, and academia. One should note, however, that over two-thirds of the Norwegian gymnas girls who have attained scholastic excellence are planning on professional careers; they are without a doubt a highly motivated, ambitious, and rather elite group of young people even when compared, for instance, with their counterparts at the German Gynasium level.

Among girls in the American high school, Norwegian ungdomsskole, and German Gymnasium, there are no discernible differences associated with scholastic performance rank in the relative popularity of teaching. Girls find teaching an extremely appealing professional career line and, perhaps because of its overwhelming popularity and its normatively sanctioned "appropriateness" for girls, scholastic ability does not emerge as a relevant factor affecting the decision to become a teacher. Only in Norway at the gymnas level do professional career opportunities other than teaching evidence competing influence and girls who have done exceptionally well at the gymnas level tend to focus their professional career goals (and preferences) on other professional alternatives. The dramatic difference in pattern between the Norwegian ungdomsskole and gymnas suggests that a comparable phenomenon might be observed in the American case if a college-level population were introduced into our analysis.

Among boys in the American case (Table 4B), a weak positive association is manifested between scholastic performance rank and the popularity of teaching as a professional career option. Teaching, we infer, is accorded lesser status and/or is viewed as a less demanding career line relative to other professions; boys whose scholastic records reflect a stronger competitive edge in vying for more prestigeful, more rewarding professional careers, are not as likely to consider teaching.

In Europe, on the other hand, there is a tendency for the more scholastically able boys to be quite favorably inclined toward teaching careers and, we infer, to regard teaching as a relatively desirable option compared with other professional career alternatives. It may be, of course, that opportunities to attain professional status are more limited in the European than in the American context and, consequently, even boys who have achieved scholastic excellence are "forced" by circumstances to consider teaching careers.

In any event, our exploratory inquiry reveals some evidence that the American system of attracting young people to the teaching profession (whether we view that system as normatively organized or based upon "self-selection") tends to be less effective in drawing boys from the upper ranks of the scholastic hierarchy than does the European. The implications of this phenomenon - its empirical, theoretical, and practical ramifications - certainly merit further consideration.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Our specific concern in this comparative study was with the selection of teaching as a career goal among rural youth in three modern, industrial societies. To comprehend more fully the meaning of observed differences in the relative popularity of teaching vis-a-vis other professional alternatives, we also explored the general patterning of career ambitions (the status dimension). The relative popularity of a teaching career, we believe, is dependent to some extent on the range and character of alternative status attainment stretegies available to young people. Within the comparative framework, our attention focused on various determinants of career choosing behavior: the sex-role factor, residence place (community context), father's occupational status, and achieved scholastic performance level. Attitudinal factors, albeit quite relevant to the issue at hand, were not considered; nevertheless, for explanatory purposes we ventured some inferences about underlying motivational dimensions (noted by the use of such terms as "strategy of career selection").

A career in teaching, we observed, is by far the most popular professional career choice of rural young people in these three societies, and especially of girls. Although girls generally are less inclined toward professional status than are boys, the overwhelming majority who contemplate professional careers aspire to teach. Indeed, one might say that the dominant theme and obvious dream characterizing the upward mobility aspirations of rural girls is "to become a teacher." This is especially so among American (rural) high school girls; over 80 percent who aspire to professional careers want to become teachers. Boys on the other hand, in both Europe and America, seem to recognize and/or have access to a wider and more varied range of professional career options that compete for their attention; only about 30 percent who aspire to professional careers want to become teachers.

This rather strong pattern of sex differentials in the relative attractiveness of a teaching career holds cross-nationally and is essentially maintained when various conditional variables are taken into account. There is little doubt that the sex-role factor, through normatively derived expectations and/or normatively sanctioned constraints, exerts enormous influence on the career choosing behavior of rural young people in all three societies, and is the main determinant to be reckoned with in explaining "who chooses to become a teacher."

The social class factor, of course, manifests considerable effect upon level of status aspiration and, as generally noted, the effect is somewhat greater for girls than for boys. We also observed that, consistently and to a greater degree in the case of girls, teaching is a more popular professional career goal among those from working class families. This is not to say that middle class youths on the whole are less interested in teaching; to the contrary, they are more likely to opt for a teaching career, for a much larger proportion of them are oriented toward professional careers and teaching commands a strong following. Rather, our findings suggest that the range of professional options available (or perceived to be available) is more limited among working class youths and, consequently, ambitious

working class youths are more likely to focus upon teaching as an appropriate strategy for attaining professional status. In other words, a career in teaching appears to represent an important way by which lower status youths, particularly girls, can hope to achieve upward social mobility.

Similarly, we found that teaching is a more popular professional career choice among the more "rural" segment of boys and girls in the American context. In Norway, however, the rurality effect obtains only for girls, and the effect is virtually nonexistent among students at the German Gymnasium level. The American findings support our assumption that the selection of a teaching career serves as a feasible status-attainment strategy in a situation where other professional career alternatives are limited. We presume that the lack of congruence in pattern between the American and European settings stems from differences in the organization of educational opportunities and in the sex-role imagery associated with the teaching profession.

Findings are more varied with respect to the scholastic performance factor. Nevertheless, two points merit special attention. Scholastic ability appears to manifest little effect upon the relative popularity of teaching among American high school and Norwegian ungdomsskole girls. Furthermore, although lower achiever American high school boys are more likely to consider teaching as a professional career option than are their more talented classmates, the converse pattern tends to prevail in the European contexts.

We infer from these data and the pattern of findings throughout this inquiry, that the teaching profession is not only 1) generally regarded as an appropriate and desirable career line by ambitious young women, but 2) is accorded somewhat higher (career choice) status among boys in the European context than in the American. Imagery of occupation, of course, tends to affect recruitment to it and, it seems, the teaching profession, particularly in the United States, is also burdened with an image suggesting that it 3) is a less demanding and perhaps less rewarding occupation than some other professional career alternatives.

The exploratory hypothesis guiding our inquiry, as we have observed, holds up rather well for both sexes in the American case. If we omit the scholastic performance factor, an extremely difficult variable to deal with cross-culturally, it also holds up quite well in the Norwegian ungdomsskole situation. (The ungdomsskole, of course, is more directly comparable with the American high school than are the secondary schools in Europe.) As a professional career goal or status-attainment strategy, the teaching profession appears to serve as a feasible option for ambitious young people whose alternatives, for one reason or the other, are relatively limited.

Clearly, in rural America and in certain respects also in rural Europe, a career in teaching represents an important means by which lower status youths, girls in general, and particularly girls from lower status origins, can enhance their lot in life and hope to achieve a modest degree of upward social mobility. It may also be that choosing to become a teacher functions as a precipitating factor or catalyst in stimulating, crystallizing, and focusing the status ambitions of rural youth, especially those in low income situations. To the extent then that entrée into the teaching profession becomes more competitive and demanding in the years ahead, this traditional "escape valve" and status attainment "model" for rural young people will become increasingly less meaningful. Such a change, we expect, will be manifested by an accompanying decline in the level of status aspirations of lower status youths and rural girls and perhaps also by a general decline in the proportion of rural young people seeking a college education.

NOTES

1. Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station Journal Article. The data for this paper were collected through a series of field surveys organized by H.K. Schwarzweller with the help, guidance, and collaboration of Herbert Koetter and Mathilda Buffen at the Institute fuer Agrarsoziologie, der Justus-Liebig Universitaet, Giessen, Germany; James S. Brown and Donald Bogie at the University of Kentucky; John Marra and Thomas Lyson at West Virginia University; and Helge Solli and Lynne Lackey at the Norges Landbrukshogskole in Vollebeck, Norway. We wish to express our appreciation to these and to many other people and agencies that helped to facilitate this work.

2. For an excellent commentary on the economics of education with particular emphasis on the investment in human resources through education, see Bowman (1966).

3. See Floud and Halsey (1959) for an insightful statement on the emergence of educational systems as strategically important insitutions in modern "technological society."

4. See Anderson (1959) for a suggestive note on the relevance of sociology in the service of comparative education.

5. A number of years ago, Morris and Murphy (1959) focused specific attention on the situs dimension in occupational classifications. For whatever reasons, their concerns and suggestions have not been pursued very actively by researchers; we suspect that interest in the status dimension, which is derived from and so neatly locks into our contemporary concerns with social inequalities and the nature of stratification systems, simply dominated the research scene and tended to overwhelm any peripheral interests of this kind.

6. This hypothesis and perspective is consistent with prevailing assumptions about the social origins of teachers. Indeed, Warner and his colleagues, utilizing data from the Yankee City studies, generalize that teaching is an avenue for moving upward in the class structure (Warner, et.al., 1944).

7. At the German Gymnasium and Norwegian gymnas levels, relatively few girls indicate that their career plan is to become a homemaker (1.1 and 3.8 percent, respectively).

8. Basically, these patterns also hold for American high school and Norwegian gymnas students where regional settings are controlled. It should be noted, however, that sex differentials in the relative popularity of teaching as a professional career are considerably reduced in the West Virginia coal county situation. (Compared with their counterparts elsewhere, boys in this county are more inclined and girls less inclined toward teaching; differences in the relative proportions choosing professional careers are minor).

9. Viewed from this perspective, our findings can be compared with those reported by Pavalko (1965).

10. For a detailed analysis of the influence of scholastic performance level on career ambition, see Schwarzweller (1976).

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TABLE 1. Occupational career choice, by sex: study populations compared (percentages).

Occupational Choice	United States high school		Norway ungdomsskole		Norway gymnas		Germany Gymnasium	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Teacher	22.4	10.3	16.1	9.7	37.0	24.2	28.3	18.9
Engineer	0.1	8.6	0.2	7.7	-	17.7	3.2	18.7
Government, business leader	0.5	3.2	0.2	1.9	-	5.6	3.0	13.9
Physician, dentist, pharmacist	0.6	2.6	2.3	1.6	6.4	7.0	5.7	7.3
Academician, scientist	1.6	1.9	0.6	1.8	5.2	4.7	1.4	11.4
All other professional	2.2	6.1	2.2	4.9	3.4	10.6	1.3	1.4
Professional, total	27.4	32.7	21.6	27.6	52.0	69.8	42.9	71.6
White collar	56.9	16.8	64.4	15.1	47.4	18.1	53.7	22.8
Farmer	-	4.7	0.2	2.4	-	1.9	-	0.2
Manual worker	15.7	45.8	13.8	54.9	0.6	10.2	3.4	5.4
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	938	1062	491	548	173	215	371	440
Teacher, as % of all professional choices	81.8	31.5	74.5	35.1	71.2	34.7	66.0	26.4
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of girls towards teaching vs. other professions	(.82)		(.69)		(.65)		(.69)	

TABLE 2A. GIRLS. Occupational career choice, by residence place: study populations compared (percentages).

Occupational Choice	United States high school		Norway ungdomsskole		Norway gymnas		Germany Gymnasium	
	Rural	Town	Rural	Town	Rural	Town	Rural	Town
Teacher	22.6	23.8	13.0	16.9	42.2	32.4	28.8	27.9
All other professional	4.0	7.9	3.2	7.0	6.3	20.4	17.8	15.8
White collar; manual*	73.4	68.3	83.8	76.1	51.5	57.2	53.4	56.3
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Teacher, as % of all professional choices	84.8	75.0	80.0	70.8	87.1	61.4	61.1	63.8
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of rural girls towards teaching vs. other professions	(.30)		(.24)		(.62)		(-.04)	

*Note: In this and subsequent tables, "white collar", "Manual worker', and "farmer" categories have been combined into a single "lower status" category for comparative purposes. All cases of missing information, for whatever reason, have been omitted.

TABLE 2B. BOYS. Occupational career choice, by residence place: study populations compared (percentages).

Occupational Choice	United States high school		Norway ungdomsskole		Norway gymnas		Germany Gymnasium	
	Rural	Town	Rural	Town	Rural	Town	Rural	Town
Teacher	10.3	11.4	6.0	12.0	21.8	26.3	19.6	18.6
All other professional	17.7	32.1	11.0	22.5	41.0	48.2	50.5	53.2
White collar; manual	72.0	56.5	83.0	65.5	37.2	25.5	29.9	28.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Teacher, as % of all professional choices	36.7	26.3	35.1	34.8	34.7	35.3	28.0	25.9
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of rural boys towards teaching vs. other professions	(.24)		(.01)		(-.01)		(.05)	

TABLE 3A. GIRLS. Occupational career choice, by father's occupational status: study populations compared (percentages).

Occupational Choice	United States high school		Norway ungdomsskole		Norway gymnas		Germany Gymnasium	
	Manual	Nonmanual	Manual	Nonmanual	Manual	Nonmanual	Manual	Nonmanual
Teacher	19.7	34.2	10.1	30.5	40.0	32.6	27.3	28.5
All other professional	3.5	12.5	1.9	13.2	8.0	21.1	9.1	19.5
White collar; manual	76.8	53.3	88.0	56.3	52.0	46.3	63.6	52.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Teacher, as % of all professional choices	85.0	73.3	84.2	69.7	83.3	60.8	75.0	59.3
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of manual worker daughters towards teaching vs. other professions	(.35)		(.40)		(.53)		(.35)	

TABLE 3B. BOYS. Occupational career choice by father's occupational status: study populations compared (percentages).

	United States high school		Norway ungdomsskole		Norway gymnas		Germany Gymnasium	
	Manual	Nonmanual	Manual	Nonmanual	Manual	Nonmanual	Manual	Nonmanual
Teacher	10.6	12.1	9.0	12.4	27.3	22.5	19.4	18.9
All other professional	18.9	38.1	13.4	28.6	38.2	54.9	47.5	54.9
White collar; manual	70.5	49.8	77.6	59.0	22.5	34.6	33.1	26.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Teacher, as % of all professional choices	36.0	24.1	40.2	30.3	41.7	29.1	29.0	25.6
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of manual worker sons towards teaching vs. other professions	(.28)		(.22)		(.27)		(.09)	

TABLE 4A. GIRLS. Occupational career choice, by scholastic performance rank: study populations compared (percentages).

Occupational Choice	United States high school		Norway ungdomsskole		Norway gymnas		Germany Gymnasium	
	Lower rank	Upper rank	Lower rank	Upper rank	Lower rank	Upper rank	Lower rank	Upper rank
Teacher	14.6	32.4	6.0	31.4	38.3	29.3	26.1	30.0
All other professional	3.2	8.5	2.3	10.1	7.5	39.0	14.7	19.2
White collar; manual	83.2	59.1	91.7	58.5	54.2	31.7	59.2	50.8
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Teacher, as % of all professional choices	81.8	79.3	72.0	75.6	83.7	42.9	63.9	61.0
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of lower ranked girls towards teaching vs. other professions	(.08)		(-.09)		(.75)		(.06)	

TABLE 48. BOYS. Occupational career choice, by scholastic performance rank: study populations compared (percentages).

Occupational Choice	United States high school		Norway ungdomsskole		Norway gymnas		Germany Gymnasium	
	Lower rank	Upper rank	Lower rank	Upper rank	Lower rank	Upper rank	Lower rank	Upper rank
Teacher	9.4	15.5	5.6	20.5	21.6	32.3	15.5	22.1
All other professional	15.6	44.3	11.4	33.3	44.8	49.2	48.6	62.6
White collar; manual	75.0	40.2	83.0	46.2	33.5	18.5	35.9	15.3
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Teacher, as % of all professional choices	37.5	25.9	32.8	38.1	32.6	39.6	24.1	26.1
Degree (Q) of association: relative inclination of lower ranked boys towards teaching vs. other professions	(.27)		(-.12)		(-.15)		(-.05)	